

What's Sprouting!

August 2015

The Newsletter of the Oxford Community Garden Association
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Garden Announcements

- Community Garden Lecture Series Begins this Month!
Please join us, and spread the word -- everyone is welcome!
Topic: Growing fruits and vegetables; Fall and Winter plants and maintenance.
Speaker: Dr. Jeff Wilson, Mississippi State Extension Specialist in Horticulture
When: August 18th at 6 p.m.
Where: Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library auditorium
- Garden Workdays: First Saturday of each month
Thanks to everyone who came out for our August workday last Saturday and all who have been helping with Community Harvest on Tuesday evenings. We focused our effort on a weedy common space on the east side of the garden but also maintained pathways around nearby plots. It is important that plot holders maintain their own pathways so that we can focus work days on common spaces.

Planting Your Fall Garden, in the Heat of Summer

When I first moved to Mississippi, I did not really believe that anything green and tender would grow after the blistering heat of August. So, I was even more shocked to read that late summer is the time to get started on a whole new garden for Fall. It already seemed like a lot of effort just to go out into the garden and do a quick and dirty weed'n'water. At first, I dismissed the idea of the extra planting. Then, as the days began to cool, my tomatoes and peppers started blossoming more and setting new fruit. They were not close to death, just exhausted by the heat like I had been. Since that first year, I have noticed that I often get the most produce out of my garden in the fall. Now I make the effort to add a few things to my garden in August. The key to success is to have a regular watering schedule.

Popping into the garden in the early morning before work or in the cooler evenings works for me. This summer, we have had a lot of rain, but that seems to be over for now. Mulch will help see your plants through a day or two when you forget to water, so don't forget to add some as you plant.

Felder Rushing, in his book, *Gardening Southern Style*, recommends the following vegetables for August planting.

- Southern peas
- Lima beans
- Broccoli
- Beets
- Carrots
- Potatoes

He also recommends you plant something called "multiplying onions." These will grow all winter and die down in April or May. Last year, another community gardener gave me "walking onions," which fall over and touch the ground as they grow, creating new plants by rooting. I'm not sure if these are the same, but they sure grew well. They were tasty and it was nice to have fresh onions when the ones at the grocery store always seemed to have fruit flies surrounding them. This year, I am going to try Felder's advice to "Protect new transplants and tiny seedlings by covering the rows with boards or cardboard so that the soil does not crust or overheat until the plants are stronger." Obviously these covers need to be checked frequently and removed as soon as the seedlings begin to emerge. Try something new this fall and let me know how it goes.

Interview with a Gardener-Sarah Ligon

How long have you been gardening? How long with OCGA?

I gardened at our home in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for 7 years before moving to Oxford last summer. This has been my first season gardening in the South and with OCGA.

What's your favorite thing to grow?

Tomatoes! Any kind. Although my "garden helper"—my four-year-old son Archer—and I also really love growing carrots, especially the purple ones.

What do you wish you could grow?

I've missed growing peonies and rhubarb. Both grew effortlessly in my Canadian garden, and the rhubarb was delicious in a strawberry-rhubarb pie.

How do you motivate yourself to go out into the garden when it's cold/wet or hot/muggy?

I actually love gardening in the cold. It's all about dressing properly. My son and I were out harvesting our winter vegetables on New Year's Day! Gardening in the dog days of summer is much more challenging for me, but my love for fresh-cut zinnias usually coaxes me to go back to the garden every few days. They are my reward for weeding and watering. Cut some yourself from the communal zinnia plots in the front corner!

What has been your most encouraging garden moment? Your biggest failure?

My most encouraging moment was growing my first eggplants this year. It was too cold in Canada to grow them. My biggest failure has been my broccoli and cabbage, which did nothing. However, my son's broccoli and cabbage did beautifully, and we planted them on the same day. Go figure!

Anything else you want to add, or wish people at the garden could know?

I think it's encouraging to others when they find out that we all have different levels of skill and experience, that we all have failures but keep trying new things.

Talk to your garden neighbors! That has been my favorite part of the OCGA so far. I have learned so much about gardening in the South from my plot neighbors Barry and Junaid. I got wonderful help early on from Bo, who tilled my plot for me when it was a foot high in weeds. And I have enjoyed commiserating with Shirley about amending the poor soil in our plots during our first season gardening with the OCGA.

Recipe-Steve's Summer Time Salsa

Best made with farmer's market or homegrown vegetables; it's a tasty way to use up all those extra tomatoes without having to make and can spaghetti sauce.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees

Wrap three garlic cloves in aluminum foil and one hot pepper (e.g., cayenne, jalapeño, or habanero) in aluminum foil (use kitchen gloves for handling pepper). Place both in oven and roast until the garlic becomes the consistency of thick toothpaste (around 15 to 20 minutes).

Puree in a food processor the following ingredients:

1/2 yellow, white, or red onion
2 red bell peppers (yellow, orange, or green are okay)
2 TBSP regular chili powder (not too hot)
1/4 tsp chipotle chili powder
1 tsp cumin
1/2 tsp oregano (Mexican if available; Italian okay)
1/2 cup chopped cilantro (or parsley if you are one of those genetic mutants who can't stand cilantro).
1 and 1/2 tsp light agave nectar (table sugar okay)
1/2 tsp salt
a few grindings of black pepper
1 TBSP fresh squeezed lime juice

Once the garlic is roasted, let it cool a little, and squeeze the garlic "paste" into the pureed mixture. Discard the outer "shells" of garlic cloves. Mix well.

Using kitchen gloves, chop the hot pepper into small pieces and set aside.

Core three to four fresh ripe red tomatoes (any kind is fine; use whatever tastes good) and then quarter them.

Add the tomatoes to the puree and pulse chop them in the food processor. Try not to liquefy them.

Add a small portion of the hot peppers and quickly pulse, taste and check for heat; add more to suit taste.

Best served immediately with corn chips and a cold margarita.

Do you have comments, questions or contributions? Contact your OCGA newsletter editor, Ashley Brewer, at msglyptodon@gmail.com. Find the Oxford Community Garden on Facebook, or at our website, www.oxfordcga.org